

EXHIBIT 15



FBI list boosted donations to bin Laden, officials say:[FINAL Edition]

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Abstract (Article Summary)

THE WORLD REPORT; 'The United States has made Osama the hero of the Muslim world' by naming alleged terrorist 'Most Wanted'

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Alarmed by the increased funding, the State Department, along with the Justice and Treasury departments, has requested \$1 million to set up a program to help bankers in the Persian Gulf region identify money directed to Islamic charities and mosques that serve as fronts for bin Laden or funnel money to him.

Full Text (628 words)

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State Department officials have also begun trying to persuade government leaders in Saudi Arabia and other gulf countries to discourage their citizens from giving money to the alleged terrorist.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is expected to raise the issue and request additional help from Saudi Arabia in fighting terrorism when she meets with the Saudi defense minister, Prince Sultan, Friday.

Bin Laden faces U.S. criminal charges for allegedly masterminding the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed more than 200 people last year. Bin Laden, who is in Afghanistan, has denied the charges.

"It's a difficult problem to tackle," said Michael Sheehan, State Department counterterrorism director. "My . . . view is much of that money that comes from the gulf is held overseas and can be moved fairly easily in today's international financial networks."

Officials said the Saudi donations are being used to plan terrorist activities, recruit men to carry out attacks and support the families of those killed conducting terrorist acts.

The CIA is so concerned about the donations that it has directed part of a task force investigating bin Laden to focus on the money transfers.

Sheehan said that bin Laden finances most of his activities through a "significant" narcotics trade, but it has become "fairly evident" that money from businessmen in the gulf region is also supporting him.

Sheehan noted that not everyone who donates money to Islamic causes knows where it is ending up.

"Some of the fundraising in the gulf in my view is done innocently," he said. "A rich individual may be asked to contribute millions of dollars to an organization to help refugees in a certain country and that funding may be diverted to terrorist activities."

USA TODAY reported last week that Saudi businessmen have donated tens of millions of dollars in the past five years to several Islamic charities that have served as fronts for bin Laden's operations.

"The United States has made Osama the hero of the Muslim world," said RahiMullah Yusufzai, a Pakistani expert on bin Laden. "Every time the U.S. draws attention to him, he grows in stature. He has become godlike."

The United Nations has threatened to impose economic sanctions on Afghanistan if it does not hand over bin Laden for prosecution by Nov. 14.

Wakil Ahmed Muttawakil, the former minister of the Taliban militia that controls 90% of Afghanistan, said Wednesday that the hard-line Islamic militia "will never force (bin Laden) to leave Afghanistan or hand him over."

The Taliban-run Radio Shariat warned that the U.N. threat on bin Laden, encouraged by the United States, will arouse the anger of Muslims worldwide. "America will suffer by creating enemies everywhere," it said.

[Illustration]

PHOTO, B/W, Doug Mills, AP; PHOTO, B/W, Rahimullah Yousafzai, AP; Caption: Welcome: Defense Secretary William Cohen and Prince Sultan, Saudi Arabia's defense minister, appear at the Pentagon Tuesday after Cohen hosted an armed forces full honors arrival ceremony for the prince. Bin Laden: Shown in Afghanistan last year, he faces U.S. criminal charges of masterminding the bombings of two U.S. embassies.

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